

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 017269
ORIGIN EA-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

66011
DRAFTED BY EA:RHOLBROOKE:CB
APPROVED BY EA - MR. HOLBROOKE
-----103421 212352Z /64
R 212304Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017269

FOR NEWSOM FROM HOLBROOKE

FOL RPT JAKARTA 0808 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO MEDAN & SURABAYA
DTD 18 JAN 78

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 0808

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ID
SUBJECT: STRETCHING TOWARD THE BREAKING POINT

REF: A) JAKARTA 0332, B) JAKARTA 0520

1. SUMMARY: INDONESIA'S SENIOR MILITARY OFFICIALS CONTINUE
TO ISSUE STERN PUBLIC WARNINGS AGAINST ILLEGAL DISSIDENCE.
WHILE STUDENTS HAVE LARGELY CONFINED THEIR DEMONSTRATIONS TO THEIR
CAMPUSES IN RECENT WEEKS, THEIR VERBAL ATTACKS ARE BECOMING
SHARPER AND MORE PERSONALIZED, FOR THE FIRST TIME
EXPLICITLY AND PUBLICLY CALLING FOR SUHARTO'S REMOVAL.
ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE SOURCE, AN AMERGENCY PLANNING
SESSION OF TOP INDONESIAN SECURITY OFFICIALS WILL BE HELD
THIS EVENING TO REVIEW THE STATE OF PLAY AS THE MARCH MPR SESSION
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 017269

APPROACHES. BOTH SIDES - THE GOVERNMENT AND THE STUDENTS -
HAVE APPARENTLY DRAWN FIRM LINES. UNLESS SOME WAY IS FOUND
TO RELEASE THE TENSION - AND NONE IS YET IN SIGHT - AN
UNTOWARD INCIDENT OR A GOVERNMENT DECISION TO CRACK
DOWN HARD COULD LEAD TO A VIOLENT CLASH IN THE STREETS.
WITH THE ACTIVE MILITARY STILL APPARENTLY FIRMLY
LINED UP BEHIND THE PRESIDENT, EVEN THIS EVENTUALITY

WOULD NOT PREVENT SUHARTO'S RE-ELECTION IN MARCH, BUT IT MIGHT CATALYZE A QUIET SEARCH WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES FOR A MORE ATTRACTIVE SUCCESSOR. END SUMMARY.

2. ONE BY ONE, SINCE THE DECMEBER 15 ARMED FORCES STATEMENT, INDONESIA'S MOST SENIOR MILITARY AND SECURITY OFFICIALS HAVE ISSUED INCREASINGLY STERN WARNINGS AGAINST THE CONTINUATION OF ILLEGAL DISSIDENT ACTIVITY. THE MOST RECENT WARNINGS CAME FROM KOPKAMTIB CHIEF OF STAFF ADMIRAL SUDOMO, WHO SAID THAT HE COULD NOT BE BLAMED IF ARRESTS WERE NECESSARY SINCE HIS WARNINGS HAD GONE UNHEEDED, AND ARMED FORCES DEPUTY COMMANDER GENERAL SURONO, WHO ONCE AGAIN PLEDGED THAT THE MILITARY WOULD TAKE FIRM STEPS AGAINST CONTINUED ILLEGAL STREET DEMONSTRATIONS. SHORTLY BEFORE, ARMED FORCES COMMANDER GENERAL PANGGABEAN CHARACTERIZED DISSIDENT ACTIVITY AS "NO LONGER AN OBSTRUCTION OR AN IRRITANT BUT A DIRECT THREAT TO THE EXISTENCE OF PANCASILA AND THE CONSTITUTION OF 1945". BECAUSE OF THAT, SAID PANGGABEAN, THE ARMED FORCES CAN "NO LONGER TOLERATE THOSE WHO ARE ACTING ILLEGALLY AND MUST MOVE FIRMLY AGAINST THEM."

3. STUDENT ACTIVISTS, AWARE OF THEIR IMTOTENCE IN THE FACE OF A CONCERTED MILITARY CRACKDOWN, HAVE MUTED THE PHYSICAL SCOPE OF THEIR ACTIVITIES. IN THE PAST TWO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 017269

WEEKS, VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE NUMEROUS DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES AND THEIR IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS AND TO THE READING OF STATEMENTS AND HANGING OF BANNERS. STUDENTS HAVE NOT RISKED TAKING TO THE STREETS AND SECURITY FORCES HAVE NOT REPEATED THEIR ACTION IN SURABAYA OF AGGRESSIVELY MOVING ONTO CAMPUS TO BREAK UP MEETINGS.

4. THE STUDENTS HAVE, HOWEVER, CONTINUED TO TURN OUT IN LARGE NUMBERS FOR ON-CAMPUS GATHERINGS AND HAVE NOT PULLED THEIR VERBAL PUNCHES. THEIR ATTACKS ON THE CONTRARY HAVE BECOME SHARPER AND MORE PERSONALIZED, WITH STUDENTS OF THE BANDUNG TECHNICAL INSTITUTE (ITB) FOR THE FIRST TIME ON JANUARY 16 PUBLICLY CALLING FOR SUHARTO'S OUSTER, SAYING THAT "STUDENTS DO NOT TRUST AND DO NOT WANT THE REELECTION OF SUHARTO AS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC". A RELIABLE SOURCE TELLS US UNIV. OF INDONESIA STUDENTS WILL ISSUE A SIMILAR STATEMENT ON JAN 21.

5. THE GOVERNMENT (NOT TO MENTION THE JAKARTA DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC AT LARGE) IS CLEARLY BECOMING INCREASINGLY JITTERY OVER STUDENT AND OTHER DISSIDENCE.

LIM BIAN KIE, THE CHIEF AIDE OF SUHARTO'S POLITICAL TROUBLE-SHOOTER LT. GENERAL ALI MURTOPO, TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE TODAY THAT A HASTILY-CONVENED MEETING OF SOME OF INDONESIA'S SENIOR SECURITY OFFICIALS WILL DISCUSS THE EVOLVING POLITICAL SITUATION LATER THIS EVENING. SCHEDULED TO ATTEND ARE INTERIOR MINISTER GENERAL AMIRMACHMUD, STATE SECRETARY LT. GENERAL SUDHARMONO (UNDOUBTEDLY ACTING AS SUHARTO'S MONITOR), SURONO, MURTOPO, PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER SOEDJONO HOERMARDANI, MILITARY INTELLIGENCE CHIEF MAJ. GEN. BENNY MURDANI AND OTHERS.

6. COMMENT. BECAUSE THE FORUM IN WHICH BIAN KIE PASSED THIS INFORMATION DID NOT PERMIT FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONING, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 017269

THE PRECISE PURPOSE OF TONIGHT'S EXTRAORDINARY MEETING IS NOT CLEAR. IT CONCEIVABLY COULD LEAD TO ARRESTS OF PROMINENT DISSIDENTS OR, EQUALLY PLAUSIBLE, TO A NEW EFFORT TO DEFUSE THE TENSION THROUGH SOME QUIET COMMUNICATION WITH THE DISSIDENTS. IT MIGHT EVEN REPRESENT A STRATEGY SESSION AMONG GOI "MODERATES", IN AN ATTEMPT TO HEAD OFF STRINGENT SECURITY MEASURES WHICH OTHERS LIKE PANGGABEAN ARE KNOWN TO BE CONTEMPLATING. (INTERESTINGLY, BIAN KIE DID NOT MENTION THE ATTENDANCE OF EITHER PANGGABEAN OR SUDOMO AT TONIGHT'S CONCLAVE, DESPITE THEIR OBVIOUS INVOLVEMENT IN THE SECURITY PROBLEM.)

7. WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT THE SITUATION HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS. SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT TRY A LIGHTENING CRACKDOWN, EVEN IF LIMITED TO A FEW PROMINENT DISSIDENTS, THE POSSIBILITY OF REACTIVE AND POSSIBLY LARGE SCALE DEMONSTRATIONS WOULD BE HIGH. WHATEVER THEIR CAUSE, CONTINUED DEMONSTRATIONS RUN AN INCREASING RISK OF ONTOWARD INCIDENT RESULTING IN SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH TO A SECURITY OFFICER OR DEMONSTRATOR, IN TURN INCITING SPIN OFF DEMONSTRATIONS AND, POTENTIALLY, A DANGEROUS SPIRAL OF ACTION AND REACTION. OUR BEST ESTIMATE IS STILL THAT THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN, BUT THE MARGIN OF SAFETY IS BECOMING DANGEROUSLY THIN.

8. EVEN THE WORST CASE WE ENVISAGE WOULD NOT IMMEDIATELY THREATEN SUHARTO'S REELECTION. ON THE CONTRARY, PUBLIC BREAKDOWNS OF ORDER ARE IN THE SHORT RUN MORE LIKELY TO SOLIDIFY RATHER THAN SPLIT THE ARMED FORCES, AND INDUCE THEM TO DEFEND THE STATUS QUO UNTIL ORDER IS CLEARLY RESTORED. RUMORS OF ANTI-MILITARY SENTIMENT IN THE MILITARY CONTINUE TO PROLIFERATE AND HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FED BY A PROVOCATIVE, SEEMINGLY ANTI-SUHARTO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 017269

SPEECH BY FORMER WEST JAVA MILITARY COMMANDER AND ASEAN SECRETARY GENERAL LT. GENERAL DHARSONO, WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE CURRENT SITUATION IN INDONESIA AS FAR FROM THE IDEALS ENVISIONED IN 1945 AND 1966. DHARSONO HAS LONG BEEN REGARDED AS A "CLOSET" CRITIC OF THE NEW ORDER, HOWEVER, AND WE CONTINUE TO FIND NO CREDIBLE EVIDENCE THAT HE HAS ANY INFLUENCE IN THE ACTIVE MILITARY OR THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT ACTIVE MILITARY LEADERS ARE NOW SEEKING SUHARTO'S OUSTER OR URGING THE SELECTION OF A NEW CANDIDATE FOR THE MARCH ELECTIONS. SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT ADAM MALIK, IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, DID SAY THAT SOME IN THE MILITARY MIGHT BE ENCOURAGING THE STUDENTS, BUT ADDED THAT MILITARY LEADERS WITH AUTHORITY OVER TROOPS WERE UNANIMOUSLY BEHIND SUHARTO.

9. A SIGNIFICANT BREAKDOWN IN PUBLIC ORDER, HOWEVER, WOULD RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT SUHARTO'S LONGER TERM PROSPECTS. IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY FURTHER UNDERCUT THE PRESIDENT'S ALREADY SLIPPING PRESTIGE AND COULD ENCOURAGE THE BEGINNING OF AN ACTIVE BUT QUIET SEARCH WITHIN THE MILITARY FOR A MORE PALATABLE SUCCESSOR. MASTERS UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic DecapTIONing: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 jan 1978
DecapTION Date: 01 jan 1960
DecapTION Note:
Disposition Action: Released in Full
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: 200504687
Disposition Comment: RECORDING OF CLASSIFICATION/RECLASSIFICATION ACTION IN SAS (STATE ARCHIVING SYSTEM) BY THE DESIGNATED AUTHORITY FOR THIS ACTION, WHO HAS APPROVED RECLASSIFICATION AND OR EXTENSION ACTION ON THIS DOCUMENT.
Disposition Date: 12 jun 2008
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: Released in Full by MURRAY ZINOMAN on 12-JUN-08 ;
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE017269
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RHOLBROOKE:CB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780033-0310
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780136/aaaabenv.tel
Line Count: 198
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 320a25e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 JAKARTA 332, 78 JAKARTA 520
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3734251
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STRETCHING TOWARD THE BREAKING POINT
TAGS: PINT, ID
To: MANILA
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/320a25e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014